

MEETING MINUTES

VERNONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD of DIRECTORS Workshop Meeting – August 27, 2022 Vernonia Schools, 1000 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia

1. CALL TO ORDER: A Workshop of the Board of Directors of Vernonia School District 47J, Columbia County, Oregon was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Stacey Pelster

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Board Present: Amy Cieloha, Javoss McGuire, Stacey Pelster, Scott Rickard, Susan Wagner, Greg Kintz and Joanie Jones.

BOARD PRESENT

Board Absent: None.

BOARD ABSENT

Staff Present: Jim Helmen, Superintendent; and Barb Carr, Administrative Assistant

STAFF PRESENT

Visitors Present: Steve Kelley, OSBA

VISITORS PRESENT

2. SUPERINTENDENT / BOARD TRANSITION PROGRAM. Review / create a robust Superintendent Evaluation System:

SUPT / BOARD TRANSITION PROGRAM

Brief Introductions were held. Board members shared their name, time on the Board, their day job, and a piece of advice to fellow board members.

Discussion was held on Collaborative Governance: an approach that utilizes effective partnerships to learn and lead together in an environment of trust and respect with a shared focus on high expectations/outcomes for all students through collective responsibility, accountability, and support.

Collaborative Government is important for Board and Superintendent relations as well as Board and Community Partnerships. Equally important is the partnership between Board members to strengthen diversity and welcome conversations to embrace the diversity among the Board. In the end, the only power of a Board is a collective decision. How do you do this? Learning and leading together.

Superintendent Evaluation: Steve Kelley stressed the importance of addressing this task more than just a once a year written evaluation. Intentionally creating opportunities throughout the year will build the relationship with the Superintendent. Stacy Pelster shared that currently the Board uses the OSBA evaluation document but have not been timely in its use. It was noted that there is language in the Superintendent's contract about evaluation timeline.

Steve Kelley suggested the following order.

1. Pre evaluation planning (start of new evaluation year)
2. Check-in meetings (recommended quarterly) held in executive session at a board meeting.
3. Information gathering
4. Compiling results
5. Conclusion – end result evaluation document

The OSBA Evaluation document contains 8 standards for review. The Superintendent's goals should be reflective of these standards. Beyond the standards there can be personal goals as well. The standards in which the Superintendent will be evaluated needs to be determined in a board meeting. This should be done at the beginning of the year. The final evaluation is presented in a public meeting usually at the March board meeting.

Part 1 of the Evaluation Component is the performance standards.

Standard 1: Visionary District leadership

Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms

Standard 3: Inclusive District Culture

Standard 4: Culturally Responsive Instructional Leadership and Improvement

Standard 5: Communication and Community Relations

Standard 6: Effective Organizational Management

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Standard 7: Effective Financial Management
Standard 8: Policy, Governance and Advocacy

Part 2 of the Evaluation Component is goals. Goals are generally based on standards but specific goals can come out of a previous evaluation and can be the most effective and impactful. Other goals can be established for the Superintendent from District Goals and District Priorities. In the first year for a new Superintendent Steve Kelley recommends focusing goals on the 8 standards. Focus on relationships, give good feedback, and don't overwhelm the Superintendent with too many areas of focus. Add a couple additional areas after the first year.

Jim Helmen prepared his goals and the areas of focus he developed. Embedded within his 5 goals are the 8 performance standards. Stacey Pelster asked that Dual Credit be a focus and add to goal #2. Susan Wagner asked that the applicable standard referenced in the goals be noted.

Part 3 of the Evaluation Component is Artifacts of Evidence / Self-Evaluation. These three areas are the measurement tools used to prepare an evaluation

1. Board Direct Knowledge. Your direct knowledge of their work, information gathered at board meetings, etc.
2. Superintendent's self-evaluation & evidence such as information shared by the Superintendent in a public meeting, or feedback from the Board to the Superintendent (in an executive session)
3. Targeted feedback survey – Steve Kelley's recommendation is to not do this during the first evaluation cycle but to start it in year two. This survey would be available in December with a February deadline. The survey will not address the full standards. The Board already has some information on this, the survey will address a few areas. OSBA has a bank of questions to assist if desired. A decision needs to be made as to who will receive the survey. It is a targeted survey designed for staff or community. This process runs through OSBA. They collect the responses and provide results to the Board.

Scott Rickard asked who is responsible for holding accountability for student performance? According to Steve Kelley, the Board will ask to receive clear reports on student performance to look at monthly. Also, by working with the District Leadership Team, you are able to hold the system accountable. The Board holds the Superintendent accountable to ensure the systems, framework and procedures are working. The Board does not focus on the "how". Don't direct the strategy, but instead direct the outcome. The Superintendent shares information with the board on the strategies.

The creation of the District Strategic Plan should be the board's priority. The Strategic Plan needs to align with the District's priorities. All reports at Board meetings are linked directly to the Strategic Plan.

A sample timeline for the Superintendent evaluation was discussed.

- At the September 8th board meeting adopt the standards for the Superintendent evaluation and the timeline to complete the evaluation.
- Check-Ins with the Superintendent. Oct. 13, Nov. 10 and Dec. 8 board meetings. This will take place in public session because you are not giving feedback. To provide feedback to the Superintendent recess to executive session. The Superintendent can choose to receive the feedback in public if desired. Steve Kelley suggested the feedback session would go around the table and provide positive feedback, then repeat with any critical feedback. OSBA can help with the first check-in if needed. There would be a cost associated with this assistance.
- Creating the evaluation document - the evaluation is a collective review in one voice. It is not an average of scores, not all comments are listed. The Board must spend time coming up with a collective response. OSBA will come and help if needed. Once this is done it is presented to the superintendent a couple days before the board meeting. At the meeting, in executive session, the board officially reviews the evaluation with the superintendent by having a good conversation. The superintendent leaves the executive session and the board continues discussion and at this time can make adjustments to the evaluation. They then go into regular session to formally adopt the evaluation.

Note: due to the language in the current superintendent contract (receive evaluation in February) Jim Helmen indicated he is willing to have his evaluation formally approved in March. He will submit an email waiving this specific language in his contract.

Board – Superintendent Working Agreement

A sample agreement was shared and discussed. Under the Board's Expectations of the Superintendent there were 15 items noted on the sample document. The board selected their top three:

- Create and/or sustain a district-wide climate of respect and inclusivity among students, staff, parents, and community members.
- Provide the board with the information analysis, and sound professional advice it needs in formulating policy and monitoring district operations/student achievement.
- Provide visionary leadership enabling the district to continually improve the educational experiences of students and achieving the goals which have been established.

Under the Superintendent's Expectations of the Board, Superintendent Helmen and Board Secretary Barb Carr selected their top three:

- Integrity in the highest order
- Willingness to acknowledge and follow the chain of command of the school district.
- Practice of avoiding surprise items at board meetings.

The Board – Superintendent Working Agreement should be reviewed annually in July and formally adopted in a public meeting. After discussion the Board agreed to designate September 29th as a workshop to complete this year's agreement.

Communication:

Steve Kelley shared that policy section A and B is critical to board work and board responsibilities. It is important for board members to know and understand these policies. He specifically addressed:

Policy BBAA – Board members have no authority individually, only collectively. As an individual board member you don't have the authority to get access to information unless the public can have it. If it's confidential information it will be presented to all board members in an executive session. Sample of this would be if there is an issue with a teacher and the board member asks the Superintendent about it and the Superintendent say yes there is an issue and the teacher is on a plan of assistance. No! If you can't share this information with the public, do not share with a board member.

Policy BCG gives the board chair the authority to seek legal advice
 Policy BBAA requires that the board take action to seek a legal opinion

Policy BBF – Board Member Standards of Conduct. Board members can be reported to Oregon Government Ethics Commission and could be fined up to \$1,000.00.

Meeting Agendas can be amended the day of the meeting but not an executive session. Executive sessions must have 24 hour notice. Executive sessions must always be part of the agenda and held within a public meeting whether that is a regular or a special meeting.

Creating a flow chart showing who to contact for what was suggested.

It was shared that all personal email accounts if used for board business must be maintained and are subject to public information laws. Jim Helmen suggested getting each board member a District email address. This way maintaining of emails will be done by the ESD.

Crisis Communication – what does this look like?

- As many avenues as possible
- Timely
- Proactive
- Messages shared from only the district office

Non Crisis Communication – what does this look like?

- Individual meeting with board members
- Emails
- Board meeting

Board Task List:

1. District Strategic Plan
2. Set-up monitoring sessions

3. Approve Evaluation Standards & Timeline on Sept. 8
4. "Success for All" workshop series?
5. Educating parents / engagement strategies
6. Board Policies BBAA and BCG
7. Board member district emails

Steve Kelley shared the Board has 3 hours remaining of the new superintendent training. What would the board like to focus on? The following suggestions were given.

- Board to Board relationship building
- **Board / Superintendent Operating Agreement (Sept 29th)**
- Update on Superintendent evaluation process
- Communication issues / adjustments
- Roles & Responsibilities
- **Monitoring sessions – this year do two sessions, 3 hours each**
- Community engagement

3. **Family Engagement & Student Representation Discussion:**

SESSION #3 RECAP

Initially discussed at the last month's meeting, there was a desire to have more time for discussion. Student Representation wasn't about having Board's representative come and give report at a meeting, it was about engagement and having open and honest conversations with students. Amy Cieloha offered to come up with sample questions to discuss at next board meeting.

Susan Wagner mentioned implicit biases and will visit with Jim Helmen privately about this.

Family Engagement:

- Volunteer Program to be developed this school year. Crossing Guards are currently needed.
- Family engagement policy?
- Just hitting the surface – get parents involved as partners.

ADJOURNED: Workshop adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

ADJOURNED

Board Chair

District Clerk